

MEANINGLESS?

Unmasking the Myths that Make us Miserable

Have you ever gotten something you always wanted? Maybe you chased it for years, working, praying, and paying for it, and once you finally had it, you felt empty and unfulfilled. And so you kept going, chasing, and thinking, "If I only had a little bit more, then I'll be satisfied." But what if that's a lie? What if the things we're all chasing were never meant to satisfy us? For six weeks we'll learn some hard lessons from the book of *Ecclesiastes*. Written by King Solomon, *Ecclesiastes* is a cautionary tale about what happens when you get everything you ever wanted and it's still not enough. With this series, we'll expose life's darkest lies by holding them up to the light of God's truth.

April 12, 2026 - Myth #1: "More Pleasure Will Satisfy Me"

What is the first and most important thing we need to understand about the book of Ecclesiastes?

How does Ecclesiastes differ from God's truth when it comes to:

- **WISDOM** (compare Ecc. 1:18 and James 3:17)
- **THE MEANING OF LIFE** (Ecc. 2:17 and John 10:10)
- **MONEY** (Ecc. 10:19 and Hebrews 13:5)
- **WOMEN** (Ecc. 7:28 and Proverbs 31:10)

King Solomon - the same man who wrote Proverbs (the book of wisdom) - wrote Ecclesiastes, which often *lacks* godly wisdom. **How can that be explained? Why did God allow this book to be included in His Word?**

Ecclesiastes 1:1-2 - The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem: "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless."

What do the Hebrew words "*habēl habēlim*", which were translated as "*meaningless*" here, literally mean? How does that add to our understanding of Solomon's claims in Ecclesiastes?

Can you relate to the feeling that the meaning of life is fleeting, unsatisfying, and hard to grasp? When was the last time you remember feeling that way about life?

Ecc. 2:1-11 - I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless. "Laughter," I said, "is madness. And what does pleasure accomplish?" I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was good for people to do under the heavens during the few days of their lives. I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a man's heart. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me. I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

What do we know about Solomon's past experiences and how they might have shaped his understanding of life?

What forms of pleasure did Solomon pursue? How do people today chase after similar pleasures today?

What does the Bible teach about the pursuit of worldly pleasures? (See 2 Tim. 2:22, 1 Tim. 5:6, and Psalm 16:11)

*You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.* - Psalm 16:11

Modern secular worldviews such as Humanism and Nihilism teach that the meaning and value of life are extrinsic rather than intrinsic. **What's the difference between *extrinsic* and *intrinsic* value and meaning, and why does it matter?**

What do we believe as Christians about life's meaning and value? Where do we find that idea in the Bible?

"Every person matters. You matter. I matter. It's the hardest thing in theology to believe."
- GK Chesterton

In light of today's readings from Ecclesiastes, why is this "the hardest thing in theology to believe"?

Your Notes:



Overflow for 6th-12th Grade TONIGHT!

All students in 6th-12th grade are invited to Overflow TONIGHT from 6:30-8pm at the church. Overflow is a night of worship, teaching, games, and tons of fun! No registration necessary - just come as you are and invite a friend!



Serve at the Book Bus for Champion Project

Our next Book Bus is happening on Saturday, April 25! The Book Bus is a pop-up where kids in foster care can pick out new books and games to take home, while enjoying activities led by volunteers. Visit thestory.church/events to see the details and sign up to serve!



Registration Open for Vacation Bible School

Registration is open for this year's VBS - **June 22-25, 2026 from 9am to noon!** VBS is open to children in PreK-4 through 5th grade. Visit thestory.church/vbs to learn more and register your children today. Cost: \$60 per child